

St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee

Agenda

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Electronic Participation at 2:30 pm

This Meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee will be held through Electronic Participation, as approved by the City of St. Catharines Council on May 6, 2020.

This Meeting may be viewed online at www.stcatharines.ca/youtube

Public Comments: The public may submit comments regarding agenda matters by contacting mseaman@stcatharines.ca by Wednesday, January 13, 2021 before 3:00 PM. Comments submitted will be considered as public information and entered into public record.

Members:

Ms. Gail Benjafield
Ms. Lorraine Giroux
Mr. Mark Hoerd
Mr. Andrew Humeniuk
Mr. Marty Mako
Mr. Brian Narhi
Mr. Justin Nicholls
Mr. Robert Speck
Mr. Peter Wing

Staff Liaison:

Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner, Planning and Building Services
Elaine Munro, Committee Secretary & Planning Technician, Planning and Building Services

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1. **Call meeting to order (Chair)**
 2. **Recognition of Traditional Territories**
 3. **Additions/Deletions to the Agenda**
 4. **Motion to approve the agenda**

5. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**
 - November 12, 2020
6. **Notice of Motion**
7. **Presentations (invited guests)**
 - 7.1 Stephen Remus and Gail Benjafeld, regarding 321 St. Paul Street
 - 7.2 Colleen Beard, Isabel Bachman, Dr. Kimberly Monk and Don Sawyer, regarding Mountain Locks Park
8. **Business**
 - 8.1 321 St Paul Street Pony Mini-Mart (Broadway Grocery)
 - Verbal update from Gail Benjafeld and Stephen Remus on proposed repairs to the building.
9. **Updates from Sub-Committees**
 - 9.1 Designations, Plaquing and Ceremonies
 - 9.2 Public Outreach and Education (POE)
 - 9.3 Research and Inventory (R & I)
10. **Information/Correspondence**
 - Sub-Item 1 - Colleen Beard, regarding Mountain Locks Park
 - Sub-Item 2 - Isabel Bachman, regarding Mountain Locks Park
 - Sub-Item 3 - Dr. Kimberly Monk, regarding Mountain Locks Park
11. **Date of next meeting**

Thursday, February 11, 2021
12. **Motion to Adjourn**

January 11, 2021

Sub-Item 1

FROM: Colleen Beard

TO: Brian Narhi, Chair, St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee (SCHAC)

Cc: SCHAC Committee Members;

Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner, City of St. Catharines

RE: Parking Partnership Proposal – Mountain Locks Park

Recent discoveries regarding Lock 15 and the proposed parking expansion have revealed a conflict that prevents me from supporting this proposal. I am convinced that the plan will compromise the southeast wingwall of Lock 15.

Therefore, I am asking the SCHAC committee members to reconsider two items:

One - to reconsider the decision to support the parking lot expansion at Glendale Place Plaza as stated in the committee's minutes of July 23, 2020; and

Two - to request that an archaeology *study* (discussed in Nov. 12 SCHAC minutes) be completed before City staff engage in further negotiations.

I will speak to the wingwall issue, but **first** I would like to clarify a misconception among SCHAV members, City staff, and some City Councilors that there was no opposition to this project. Dr. Kimberly Monk and myself communicated several times with Chloe Richer, Brian Narhi, and councilors when this story first broke last February 26th, 2020 through Karena Walters' Council Report. At this time we learned that this application was discussed at Council without any prior consultation with SCHAC. Subsequently when SCHAC did become involved, Dr. Monk and I submitted communication for the committee to consider at their March 10th committee meeting (occurred July 23) that strongly suggested the need for a geophysical and archaeological study prior to final approval. Unfortunately, this was not realized.

WINGWALL in jeopardy

Communication from Councillor Lori Littleton (FB: Friends of Mountain Locks Park):

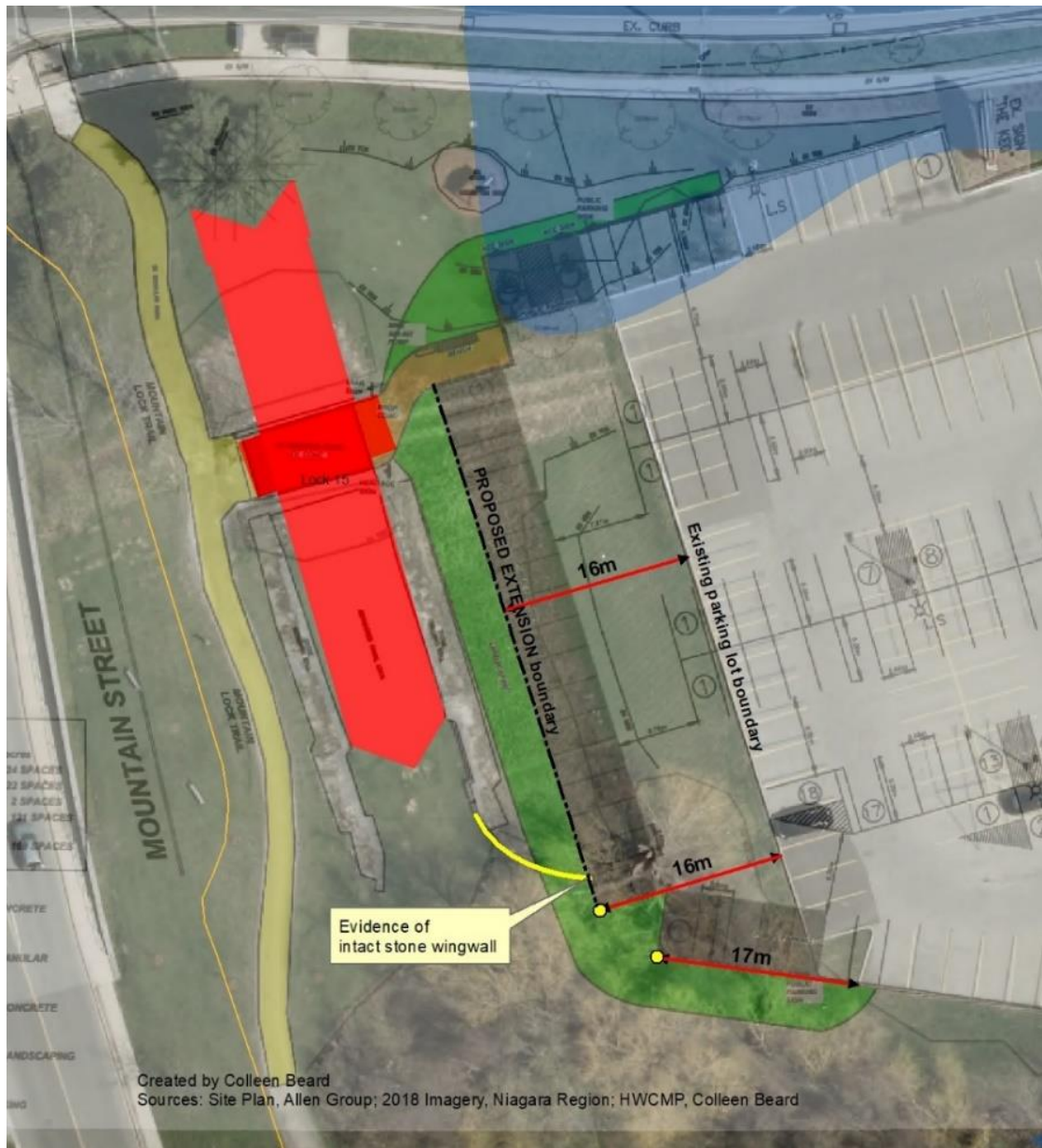
*"Coun. Greg Miller and I have been clear that [City] staff has stated that **the structural integrity of the locks will not be compromised.**"*

This is simply not true.

According to the site plan provided by the Allen Group, the extent of the parking lot expansion with reference to the current landscape can be seen in the accompanying diagram below. This has also been laid out "on the ground" with the following observations. The western boundary of the expansion does not converge on the lock chamber wall. However, lock structures include other elements other than the chamber itself - where the concern seems to be focused. It includes wingwalls – the structures that extend beyond the lock gates gradually to a ~45 degree angle, in the case of the Second canal locks. Surface evidence indicates that the original stone wingwall of Lock 15 remains intact and extends within, or in very close proximity to (within feet), the boundary of the proposed parking lot at the southwest corner.

Much of this is overgrown and below surface. The diagram illustrates exactly where a shovel hit the top of the wingwall and is assumed to extend well beyond this point. Its extent would only be determined if an archaeology or engineering study were conducted.

Therefore, contrary to what City staff have assured you, the structural integrity of the Lock 15 wingwall will indeed be compromised.



Explanation of mapping process:

Using ArcGIS mapping technology, the developers plan (Allen Group) was overlaid onto aerial imagery so it aligns geographically with the current landscape. Taking a few measurements from the digital map, the expansion was surveyed on-site and stakes were positioned at the western boundary (yellow points on the map) with probable accuracy of 1 meter. The proposed site plan from Allen Group fails to indicate the extent of the wingwall.

Furthermore, the 200th anniversary of the Welland Canals is 2029. Council passed (Moved by Merritton Councilor, Lori Littleton) at its Nov. 9th meeting to establish a 2029 Welland Canals Project Task Force, “tasked with creating an overall plan on how to better showcase the old First and Second Welland Canals”; AND “... to attain national historical status ...”.

I don’t think our resume would impress if we demonstrate that we’d rather pave over our heritage rather than preserve it!

Park “underutilized”?

There is another misconception that this park is underutilized. What study or proof do we have that leads us to this conclusion? Was there a “user” study done to make this claim? If not, it is all hearsay with no basis. If there is a perception this park is underutilized it’s probably because the City does not do well in boasting and promoting its only canal heritage park. It is the likes of our researchers, and canal and heritage advocates, such as ourselves, that educate the public. Are we to buy into the Developers platform that a few parking spots is going to increase usability? A previous failed attempt dictates that it probably will not.

Environmental issues

It is so important to understand that the "unmaintained" strip of green space that separates the existing pavement and Lock 15 functions as an ecological "buffer" that acts to avoid other natural degrading processes to the lock feature. The fact that it is not maintained and left for natural growth is probably the best buffer you could ask for. With this removed and paved introduces a host of destructive processes – “runoff” being one.

It also seems contrary to the City’s recent declaration of a climate emergency. Does paving not increase the carbon footprint?

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to request from City staff an archaeology study to verify the claim regarding the wingwall before moving forward. As well, to overturn your decision and NOT support the City’s recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Beard, BSc., MLIS
Librarian Emeritus, Map, Data & GIS Library, Brock University



Lock 15 Second Welland Canal, 1845-1887
(*Toronto Star* 1936)

January 11, 2021

St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee

My name is Isabel Bachmann of 44 Mountain Street in St. Catharines. That's my childhood home as well, within sight of the old canal. The channel was open back then, and did not always look or smell exactly pleasant, but it was my playground. I knew every inch of it. It has been magical for seven decades and I hope to enjoy it for one or two more. Now it is Mountain Locks Park.

As a child, I learned all I could about the canal, from books, and maps, listening to older relatives and neighbours who worked in one or the other of the industries from Thorold town line way down to Lincoln Avenue. As I grew, I studied the significance of the canals and the locks (First and Second) in the growth of Merritton, greater Niagara and the Dominion itself. Later in life, the love of canals and history led me to the St. Catharines Museum as a volunteer and then a guide to all four Welland Canals. I am an adult educator and spent over 20 years teaching local classes in Local History. I would have done it for free!

This history is why I am asking you to rethink the significance of the park, and why we need to keep its integrity intact. The other submissions will deal with physical and archaeological factors. I want to address specific points that meet the committee's mandate.

1. *The SCHAC also works with other heritage organizations and strives to provide public outreach and education.*
 - i) The proposed parking extension will bring the paved surface 4 meters away from the east wall of Lock 15. An engineering report could determine if there is possibility of a wall shift.
 - ii) Lock 15 is the only lock exposed enough to display the gate wells and stop gaps and is the only one in which you can measure the width of the lock. As a teaching tool, it is invaluable.
 - iii) None of the other locks in the park afford a class a closeup view of the stone construction, for seated notetaking or role-play as canal workers.
 - iv) A teacher pointed out that he would be worried about cars parking in such proximity when he conducts walking tours, citing safety issues.
2. *In particular, the Committee develops projects that celebrate built heritage and creates education programs to foster a better understanding of heritage and the importance of heritage preservation and adaptive reuse.*
 - i) Aside from public school programming, I have led many multigenerational walking tours through the park through the back trails. Their jaws drop when they see what is hidden in the trees. The path runs between the south berm of the new/old parking area and the little watercourse that runs east to west to the conduit south of Lock 15. The parking lot will eradicate the end of the trail, which is the only access from Lock 15 to this trail. (see map)
 - ii) There is a hidden treasure: the 'sunken barge' in the little channel just to the south side of the berm. In the diagram provided of the proposed extension, please note that the bottom

right end of the proposed incursion meets and in fact might interfere with the little stream there. When the stream is dry in some seasons, the ribs of the old barge lay exposed. I do not believe the sponsors of the proposal are aware the barge is there. It is not visible for much of the year. (photo attached: Roger Bradshaw)

iii) This last autumn, the Canadian Canal Society folded ending a long run of promoting all canals but the Welland in particular. I served as a Board Member and was looking forward to the 200th Anniversary celebrations for the First Welland Canal, Mr. Merritt's Ditch. Now we have only loosely connected but unofficial social media groups to appreciate the canals. Canal lovers have just a handful of years left to plan the big anniversary of the first transit of a cargo ship from lake to lake. As the voice of heritage in St. Catharines, you should be aware that without preservation, walls may collapse, berms may deteriorate and without civic oversight, this visual industrial history might slowly disappear.

iv) We can show people what this strip of land means in the foundation of this city, for the economic powerhouse it was, and what we can learn from it. It makes no sense to chop off sections for purposes that can be met in other ways.

3. *St. Catharines Public Parks Policy 2005*

i) Any number of park policies urge preservation and promotion of this city's canal heritage. I've clipped several and attached them to this document.

4. *Garden City Plan 5. General Policies*

c) Private property encroachments on municipal parkland, open space and natural areas should not be permitted and should progressively be eliminated in order to maximize the use and enjoyment of these areas for public purposes.

Recently the City of Moncton faced a similar request for a local restaurant to extend their parking over city property, including burying a watercourse. They rejected the plan, stating that the plan required city approval to rezone the land from community use and conservation to suburban commercial.

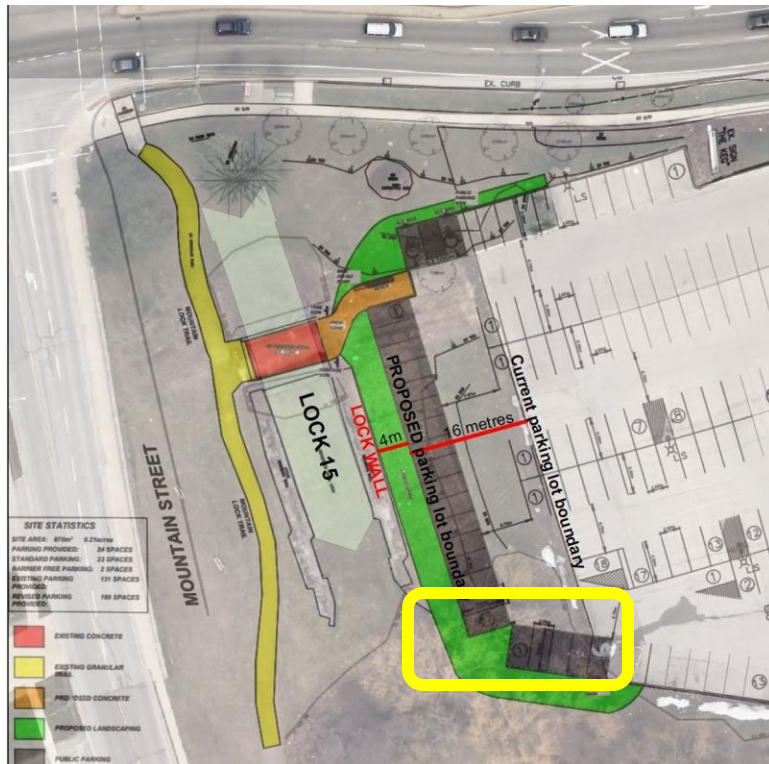
"If we do something like that, where does it place all other conservation land in our community," Mayor Dawn Arnold said. "Nothing will be safe."

This evening I asked Arden Phair, former longtime curator of the St. Catharines Museum, if he had any thoughts about Mountain Locks Park and the incursion of a parking lot beside the old lock. He was unaware of the parking proposal until last week. I wonder how many others have missed out about the proposal. Arden's first project for the museum in 1978 was to find a way to enhance the potential of Bradley Street park, now Mountain Locks Park.

I hope that we will do something to incorporate the locks into an educational and recreational walk into history. Once the integrity of the locks are compromised, it will be too late. Where else can you stand on the spot where towboys led their beasts 180 years ago? Surely that is a more valuable experience than parking a car. Let the cars go elsewhere, where they will not trample history. Save the canals.

Sincerely

Isabel Bachmann



The yellow oblong marks the area that eradicates the path along the north side of the watercourse that hides the sunken barge.

This photo, *Colleen Beard*



Exposed ribs of the old sunken barge, directly south of newly proposed parking expansion, south side of current parking area.

This photo, courtesy of Roger Bradshaw in his book *Historic Welland Canals*

From the **St. Catharines Parks Policy Plan**:

The following **mission statement** has been created based on public input to this Plan and will assist in guiding the actions and policies of the City in regard to parks, open space and trails:

To develop and promote a diverse and connected system of quality parks, open space and trails that makes the best use of available resources, encourages stewardship and provides the most benefit and enjoyment for all St. Catharines residents and visitors while preserving, protecting and enhancing the City's natural and heritage resources for future generations.

The following weaknesses were identified:

*There is a lack of awareness
of the "gems" in the park
system.*

- **Facilities** such as washrooms are lacking in parks.
- **Littering/ By-Law Enforcement**
- **Promotion & Education of Parks.** There is a lack of awareness of the "gems" in the parks system.
- **Agreements.** There are a lack of formal joint-use agreements with school boards.
- **Upgrading.** There is a need to upgrade and replace playgrounds; rejuvenate parks.
- **Priority Setting.** There is a perceived lack of a "game plan" for establishing parks and trails.
- **Heritage Resources.** The public generally feels that there is a lack of attention/priority given to heritage resources, especially the canal.
- **Greening.** More emphasis is needed on greening especially in core.

schedules for such

- ❖ Identify opportunities within the parks system for public art and cultural property. Opportunities to promote the City's canal heritage and to highlight historical remnants of the old Canal system should be emphasized.
- ❖ Encourage the St. Catharines Culture Committee to consider the role of the City's Parks when investigating a potential Public Art Program.
- ❖ Ensure all community members interested in installing substantial commemoratives or memorials be referred to the Public Art Advisory Committee early in the development process, with the intent of increasing the cultural value and interest of all future installations.

Section 6: Park Development & Renewal

- ❖ Investigate options for end-use at Morningstar Mill and the Lighthouse, exploring the potential for community partnerships and revenue generation.
- ❖ Partner with Welland Canal development initiatives in the region, with the aim of leveraging provincial and federal funding for canal site development in the city's parks, and promoting the City's canal heritage.
- ❖ Encourage the Culture Committee and/or Heritage Committee to assess the need for policy development to address the role of the municipality in managing these heritage assets.

FROM: Kimberly Monk, Brock University

TO: Brian Narhi, Chair, St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee (SCHAC)

Cc: SCHAC Committee Members; Michael Seaman, Heritage Planner, City of St. Catharines

January 12, 2021

RE: Parking Partnership Proposal – Mountain Locks Park

The submissions by my colleagues highlight a clear impact to Lock 15. I will not repeat their excellent points but what I wish to address is the call by the Heritage Committee for archaeological monitoring, and not a Stage 2/3 archaeological assessment that would include geophysics.

In correspondence with Chloe Richter on 28 February 2020, I suggested an archaeological assessment that included geophysics, to establish the extent of the structure. This was informed from map overlays prepared by Colleen Beard which illustrate that the proximity of the parking development had the potential to affect the lock. In July 2020, the heritage committee called instead for an archaeological monitor. I understand that this is standard practice which is undertaken when there might be an archaeological concern. In December 2020, Colleen Beard was however able to confirm that there would be impact to the wingwall.

When a development takes place in an area of high cultural potential, an archaeological site assessment is required. Monitoring is undertaken to ensure that adverse impacts on archaeological sites which could not be predicted or evaluated prior to construction are addressed. With the Mountain Locks Park issue, we know there is archaeology and that it will be impacted. The proposal for monitoring, once development has begun, is simply too late.

My concern here is our built heritage – this historic second Welland Canal lock – and not simply the potential for portable antiquities. While the canals' history and legacy are well known to the local community, their value has frequently been dismissed in support of development as for example the burial of Lock 14 beside Sobey's and Lock 3 below Hwy 406. The current proposal follows this path with striking similarity. An assessment of Lock 15 was not undertaken in advance of preparing the engineering plan and has therefore not considered this significant feature of a canals' lock design. Interestingly, the lock wall is listed as a "stone retaining wall" in their report. Specialists need to be consulted on these issues when capacity is not available internally. The Committee cannot be expected to foresee impact to every type of archaeological site. But it can invite expert knowledge and archaeological assessments when a project warrants a more careful review. I strongly believe Lock 15 deserves a systematic archaeological assessment.

I implore the committee to reconsider the issue here given this additional evidence, and to review the impact that this parking development will have on Lock 15. As we move toward the bicentennial, we need to work together to better reengage the historic canals and importantly to ensure funding to preserve their legacy. Let us not lose sight of the value of our heritage corridor, and of the communities that were formed as a result of canal engineering.

Dr. Kimberly E. Monk | Department of History | Brock University | St Catharines, ON, Canada
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